

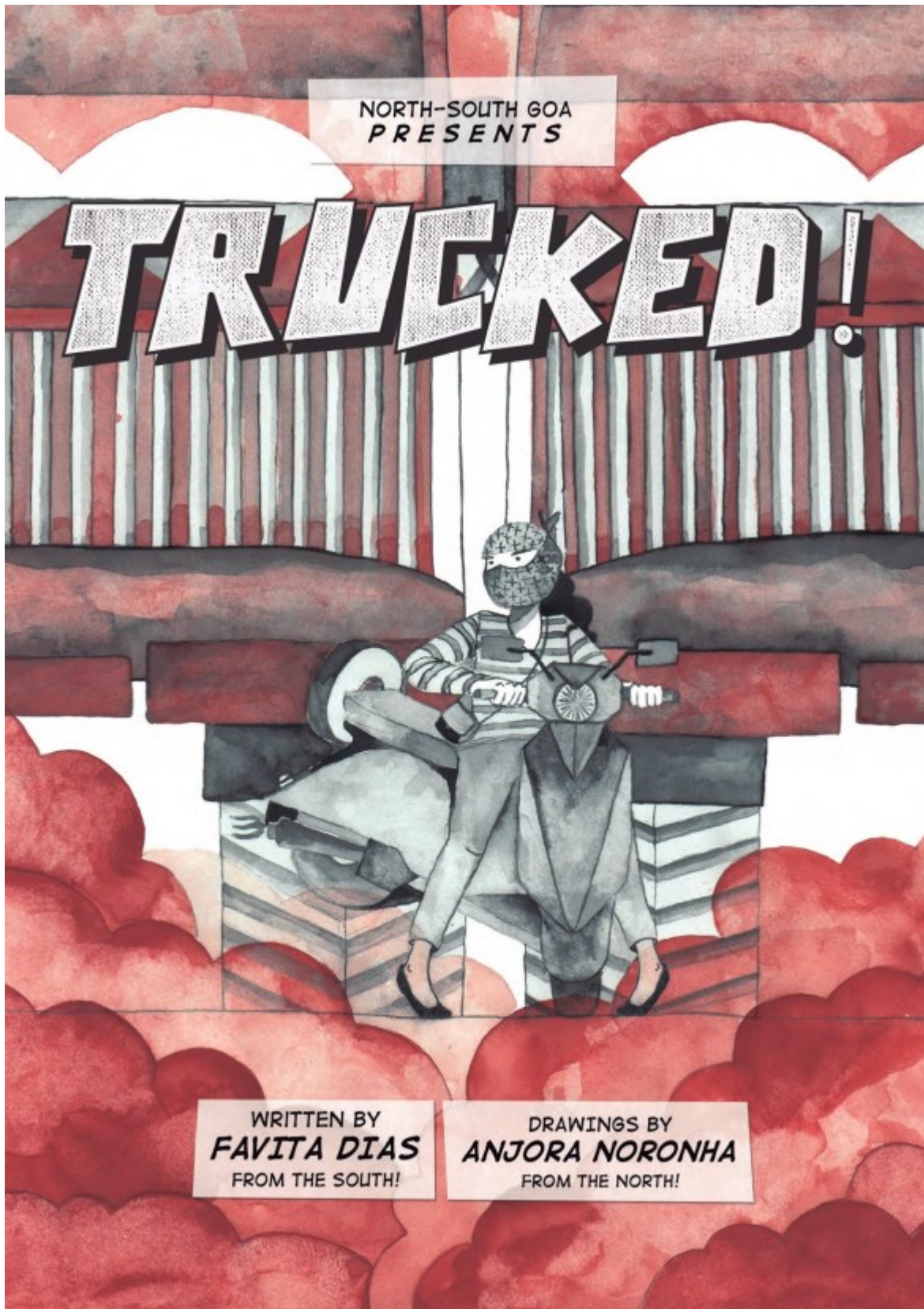


By Favita Dias

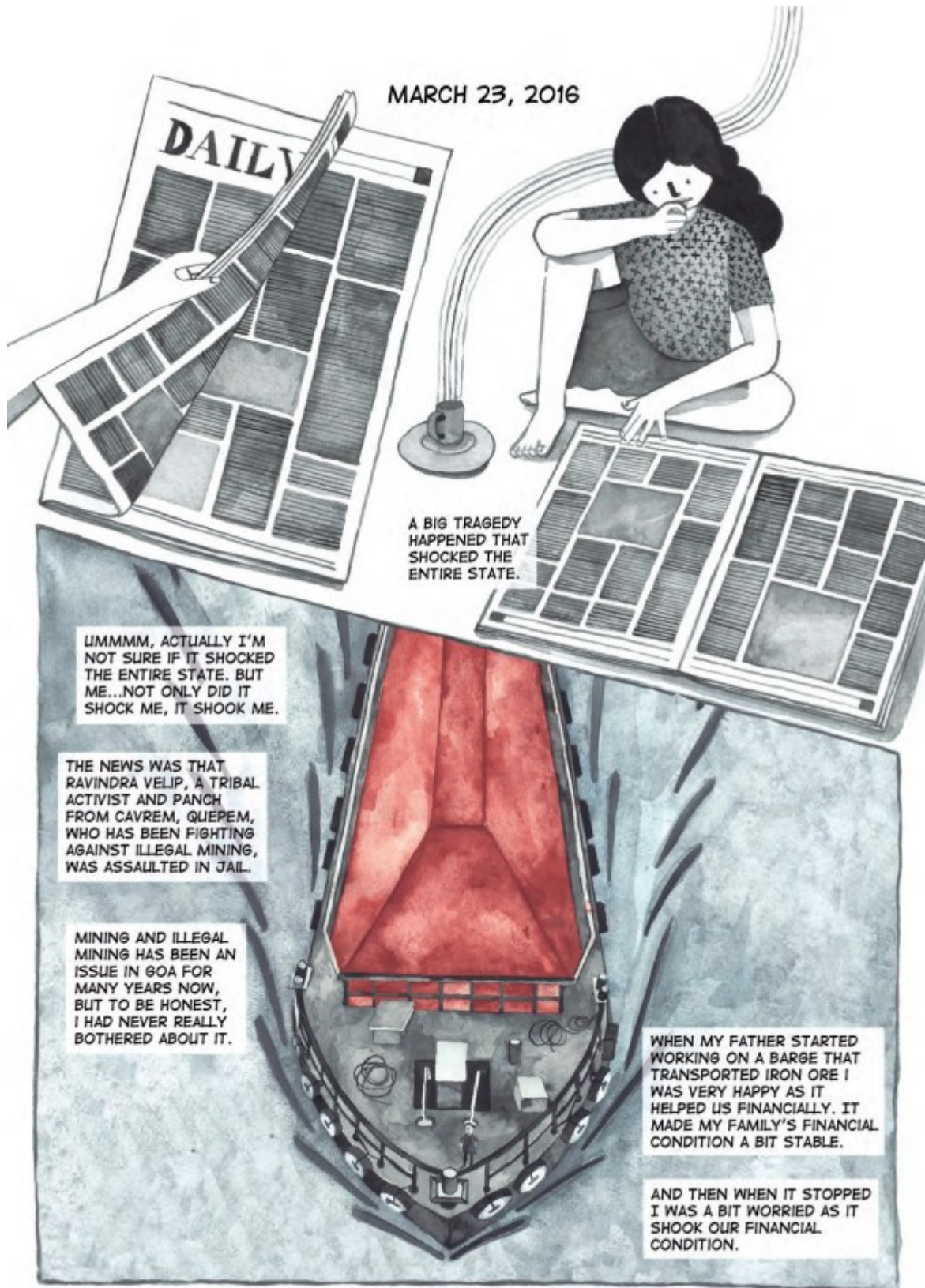
Illustrations by Anjora Noronha

Trucked!

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MARCH 23, 2016



A BIG TRAGEDY HAPPENED THAT SHOCKED THE ENTIRE STATE.

UMMMM, ACTUALLY I'M NOT SURE IF IT SHOCKED THE ENTIRE STATE. BUT ME...NOT ONLY DID IT SHOCK ME, IT SHOOK ME.

THE NEWS WAS THAT RAVINDRA VELIP, A TRIBAL ACTIVIST AND PANCH FROM CAVREM, QUEPEM, WHO HAS BEEN FIGHTING AGAINST ILLEGAL MINING, WAS ASSAULTED IN JAIL.

MINING AND ILLEGAL MINING HAS BEEN AN ISSUE IN GOA FOR MANY YEARS NOW, BUT TO BE HONEST, I HAD NEVER REALLY BOTHERED ABOUT IT.

WHEN MY FATHER STARTED WORKING ON A BARGE THAT TRANSPORTED IRON ORE I WAS VERY HAPPY AS IT HELPED US FINANCIALLY. IT MADE MY FAMILY'S FINANCIAL CONDITION A BIT STABLE.

AND THEN WHEN IT STOPPED I WAS A BIT WORRIED AS IT SHOOK OUR FINANCIAL CONDITION.

WHEN THIS NEWS SPREAD ABOUT THE ATTACK ON RAVINDRA VELIP, MINING WAS BACK IN MY LIFE.

DID I KNOW RAVINDRA? WAS HE A FRIEND OR A RELATIVE?

WELL, NO.

SO WHAT MADE ME SO EMOTIONAL TOWARDS THE WHOLE ISSUE?



MAYBE BECAUSE HE WAS A TRIBAL, LIKE ME...

...OR BECAUSE HE WAS YOUNG, LIKE ME...

...OR BECAUSE I HATED POLITICIANS AND THE POLICE.



I DECIDED TO JOIN.

OBVIOUSLY WITHOUT INFORMING MY PARENTS.

WHY, YOU ASK?

BECAUSE I DID NOT WANT TO GET GROUNDED OR KICKED OUT OF MY HOUSE.

I DO NOT HAVE A HOUSE OF MY OWN WHERE I CAN LIVE BY MY OWN RULES.



MORNING ARRIVED.



I WAS VERY NERVOUS ABOUT MY PLAN. I HAD NEVER GONE SO FAR ON MY SCOOTER WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE (EXCEPT FOR ONCE WHEN I WENT TO THE NORTH OF GOA).



MY MAIN CONCERN WAS: WHAT IF I MET WITH AN ACCIDENT AND THEN DIED, HOW WOULD ANYONE KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME?!?!?!?

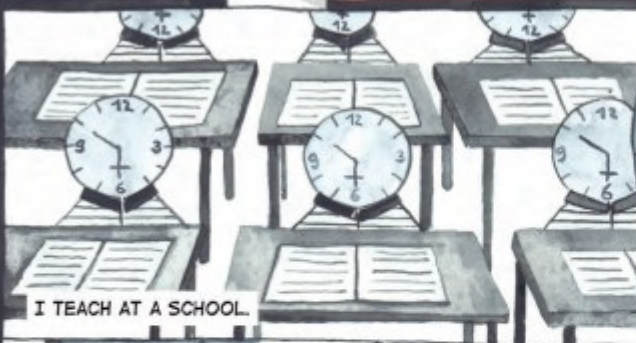
AND ANYWAY, I DID NOT WANT TO DIE WHEN I HAD LIED AND GONE OUT.

SIMPLY BECAUSE AFTER MY DEATH PEOPLE WOULD SAY: 'SHE LIED AND WENT, AND THEN SEE WHAT HAPPENED.'

ALL THESE THOUGHTS WERE RUNNING THROUGH MY HEAD AS I WAS RIDING TO WORK.



THINGS NEVER GO AS PLANNED.



I TEACH AT A SCHOOL.



MORE AND MORE WORK!



FINALLY.

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FINALLY I WAS
READY TO LEAVE.



THE LADY GAVE ME SUCH A LOOK, IT MADE ME FEEL LIKE A TERRORIST OR AS IF I WAS GOING TO ENTER A SNAKE PIT.



SHE TOLD ME TO FOLLOW THE TRUCKS.

NOT THE FULL ONES, BUT THE EMPTY ONES GOING TO THE MINING AREA.



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AS I WAS FOLLOWING THE TRUCKS, I SAW A POLICE VAN. THAT'S WHEN I WAS SURE THAT I WAS ON THE RIGHT PATH.

WOW!! THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN A DEMONSTRATION AND ACTUALLY ACTIVELY BEING A PART OF A GROUP FIGHTING INJUSTICE!

WHILE I WAS LOST IN THESE THOUGHTS I REALIZED THAT SOMETHING WAS FOLLOWING ME.

OMG!!

IT WAS TIME TO RUN.

I GET SHIT SCARED OF HUGE VEHICLES, ESPECIALLY WHEN I AM ON MY SCOOTER.

I FEEL LIKE THEY ARE MONSTERS THAT WILL EAT ME UP.





NEVER IN MY LIFE HAD I SEEN SO MANY TRUCKS.

I SPED UP LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

THE ONLY THING ON MY MIND WAS RUN FAVITA, RUN!

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO.

MY EYES WERE PLEADING TO SEE A HUMAN OR A VEHICLE OTHER THAN THE TRUCKS.

EVEN AN ANIMAL WOULD DO.

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FINALLY, AFTER AN HOUR OF RIDING, I WON THE RACE AND REACHED MY DESTINATION.

I WAS ALIVE.



THIS WAS MY FIRST TIME AT A DEMONSTRATION. I WAS VERY PROUD OF MYSELF FOR HAVING COME. IF I HAD NOT COME, I WOULD HAVE NEVER SEEN WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING.

EVERYTHING I READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS, I COULD SEE LIVE HERE.

I COULD FEEL THE ANGER, FRUSTRATION AND RAGE OF THOSE GATHERED HERE, AND IT PASSED ON TO ME ALSO.



भुआरा हमारा नेता है, माइनिंग का पैसा खाता है

THE OLD LADIES MADE ME FEEL LIKE A CELEBRITY FOR COMING TO HELP THEM. BUT, I WAS NO CELEBRITY.



तुन्हें दिलो अम्का सार आमी मानली बा असची हार

THE REAL CELEBRITIES WERE THE PEOPLE HERE.

I WAS TOLD THAT THE NUMBER OF MONSTERS WAS RATHER LESS BECAUSE ONLY ONE MINE WAS OPEN.

WHAT?!?!?

I WONDERED WHAT THE SCENE WOULD BE WHEN ALL THE MINES WERE OPEN.

HELL!!!

THE MINING COMPANIES SHOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT THE LOCALS SAID THAT IF THEY WANT TO CONTINUE MINING THEY SHOULD DO IT THROUGH COOPERATIVES. THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WAS IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE MINING.

IF I LIVED HERE, I WOULD BE TOTALLY AGAINST MINING OR ELSE I WOULD DIE.

BUT WHEN I SAW RAVINDRA, I GATHERED COURAGE.

I SAID TO MYSELF 'LOOK AT HIM. IF YOU FEEL LIKE CRYING, THEN WHAT MUST HE BE FEELING?'



Trucked!

WHILE RETURNING FROM CAVREM I WAS SO EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED, THINKING ABOUT THE WHOLE MINING ISSUE. WOULD POWERFUL PEOPLE BE SUCCESSFUL OR WOULD PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS WIN?

I REALLY HOPE THAT THERE IS JUSTICE. SO MANY PEOPLE SHOWING SOLIDARITY. FEELS GOOD.

THE CALM AND COMPOSED WAY IN WHICH RAVINDRA IS HANDLING ALL THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIM IS COMMENDABLE. I WISH I COULD TAKE SOME OF HIS COURAGE TO FIGHT FOR MY RIGHTS AND NOT HIDE FROM BEING MYSELF AND DOING SOMETHING GOOD.

WHERE'S YOUR HELMET? AND HOW COME YOU'RE SO LATE TODAY?

FAVITA!

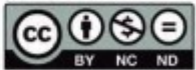
MAMA!

I HAD TOO MUCH WORK.

WHY IS YOUR BIKE SO DUSTY?

THE END.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALITO SIQUEIRA, SALLI CHATURVEDI & KABIR TOMBAT FOR THEIR FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT



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